

Remarks

This Application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action. All pending claims 1-39 were rejected in the Office Action. Claims 1, 3, 15, 17, 27, 29, and 39 have been amended. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of all pending Claims 1-39.

Finality of the Office Action

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the telephone conference on September 13, 2005. During that telephone conference the Examiner indicated that the Office Action was not a final Office Action. Therefore, Applicant is treating the Office Action as non-final.

Section 103 Rejections

Claims 1-3, 5, 6, 10-17, 19, 20, 23-29, 31, 32, and 35-39 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over International Patent Application No. WO 00/57318 issued to Forde et al. ("*Forde*") in view of International Patent Application No. WO 00/62220 issued to Brown et al. ("*Brown*"). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection for the reasons below.

Claim 1 recites:

A digital signature system comprising:
a database holding access control rules that identify documents authorized users are allowed to have electronically signed; and
a signing system capable of receiving signature requests from a plurality of authorized users, each signature request including a document to be signed, wherein said signing system parses the document to be signed and compares information obtained thereby to the access control rules stored in said database to determine whether the authorized user is authorized to have the document signed, and wherein if it is determined that the authorized user is authorized to have the document signed, the signing system signs the documents using signing system authentication information, the signing system authentication information associated with the signing system, the signing system authentication information being used to sign the document regardless of which of the plurality of authorized users requested the document be signed.

Regarding Claim 1, the combination of *Forde* and *Brown* does not disclose, teach, or suggest a signing system signing documents using signing system authentication information

associated with the signing system and used to sign documents regardless of which of a plurality of authorized users requested the document be signed. Instead, *Forde* discloses:

Server 36 runs electronic purchase order 60 through a hashing operation which generates a unique fixed-length hash. The hash is then converted into a digital signature by encryption of the hash using an encryption key private to [a particular user]. The digital signature is then affixed to electronic purchase order 60.

Forde, page 12, lines 19-22. Similarly, *Brown* discloses that "the method continues by encrypting 722 the message digest using the signer's private key to generate the signer's digital signature 118." *Brown*, page 28, lines 7-8. Both *Forde* and *Brown* disclose signing documents using the requesting user's signature. Therefore, neither *Forde* nor *Brown* disclose signing documents using signing system authentication information associated with the signing system and used to sign documents regardless of which of a plurality of authorized users requested the document be signed. For at least these reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 1 is patentably distinguishable from the cited references and requests that the rejection of Claim 1 be withdrawn.

Claims 15, 27, and 39 include similar limitations to those discussed above with respect to Claim 1. Claims 2, 3, 5, 6, and 10-14 depend from Claim 1, Claims 16, 17, 19, 20, and 23-26 depend from Claim 15, and Claims 28, 29, 31, 32, and 35-38 depend from Claim 27. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejections of Claims 2, 3, 5, 6, 10-17, 19, 20, 23-29, 31, 32, and 35-39 be withdrawn.

Claims 4, 18, and 30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Forde* in view of *Brown*, as applied to claims 1-3, 5, 6, 10-17, 19, 20, 23-29, 31, 32, and 35-39, and further in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0078140 issued to Kelly et al. ("*Kelly*").

Claim 4 depends from Claim 1, Claim 18 depends from Claim 15, and Claim 30 depends from Claim 27. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejections of Claims 4, 18, and 30 be withdrawn for at least the same reasons as those discussed above regarding Claims 1, 15, and 27.

Claims 7-9, 21, 22, 33, and 34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Forde* in view of *Brown*, and further in view of *Kelly*, as applied to Claims 1-3, 5, 6, 10-17, 19, 20, 23-29, 31, 32, and 35-39, and further in view of U.S. Patent Application No. 5,742,769 issued to Lee et al. ("*Lee*").

Claims 7-9 depend from Claim 1, Claims 21 and 22 depend from Claim 15, and Claims 33 and 34 depend from Claim 27. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejections of Claims 7-9, 21, 22, 33, and 34 be withdrawn for at least the same reasons as those discussed above regarding Claims 1, 15, and 27.

CONCLUSION

Applicant has made an earnest attempt to place this case in condition for allowance. For the foregoing reasons, and for other reasons clearly apparent, Applicant respectfully requests full allowance of all pending claims.

If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference would advance prosecution of this Application in any manner, the Examiner is invited to contact Keiko Ichiye, Attorney for Applicant, at the Examiner's convenience at (214) 953-6494.

No fee is believed to be due. However, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-0384 of BAKER BOTTS L.L.P.

Respectfully submitted,

BAKER BOTTS L.L.P.
Attorneys for Applicant



Keiko Ichiye
Reg. No. 45,460

Date: September 14, 2005

Correspondence Address:

Customer Number

05073